
REACHING FOR THE STARS IN MATH

Hamlin Park School #74

Buffalo, New York

Hamlin Park School #74 implemented the Family Math Program during the 2002-03 school year to support students in improving their math achievement. As part of the Comprehensive School Education Plan, the Math Action Team for Partnerships designed a One-Year Action Plan in Mathematics that focused on two goals: to inform parents of what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level and to provide the parents with hand-on activities enabling them to support student work at home. The Family Math program mirrored these goals by introducing parents to practices that enabled them to assist their children to improve their math skills and gain an appreciation for math. Kindergarten through sixth grade parents, students, and teachers participated in this program.

To implement this practice, teachers attended three two-hour in-services on developing and delivering Family Math workshops. Teachers actually participated in math activities as part of the course. Family Math suggests six consecutive weeks of one-hour workshops for parents and students. Teachers involved in the training chose six late afternoons in March and April. The school sent home letters explaining the program and inviting each family to participate. Parents responded with dates they would attend.

The Family Math teachers met several

times to choose activities to present to students and parents at each session. Each teacher collected any needed materials and designed their own stations. The greatest challenge the school faced was in finding the best time to accommodate parents and the teachers volunteering their time.

There was no cost to implement this practice. Teachers used materials available in school or at home, or donated by other staff members. The district funding for parent involvement was used to provide nutritious refreshments, and to provide parents with materials to replicate the activities at home.

Students benefited from Family Math as they shared knowledge of math skills with their parents and engaged together in problem solving, experimenting, and discovering. The workshops gave parents the means to support their children in math at home. In the beginning, some parents were hesitant because they were unsure of their own math skills. With Family Math, they found that using math is an everyday occurrence that can be fun.

Overall, Hamlin Park's first attempt at this program proved to be a successful way to provide help to families in understanding mathematical concepts and strategies.

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